

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 103845

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SUBJECT: TIM PEARCE NEWS FEATURE ON USLO ANNIVERSARY

FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF TIM PEARCE NEWS FEATURE ON
USLO ANNIVERSARY:

BEGIN TEXT:
PEKING, MAY 16, REUTER -- TALKING TO CHINESE OFFICIALS
ABOUT FUNGUS-TAINTED WHEAT, AS A TEAM OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS
ARE NOW DOING, MAY SEEM AN ODD WAY TO CELEBRATE THE FIRST
ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE UNITED STATES MISSION IN
PEKING. BUT IT IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE BUSINESSLIKE ATTITUDE
WHICH HAS DEVELOPED IN SINO-US RELATIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR
AFTER THE INITIAL ENTHUSIASM FOR A NEW-FOUND FRIENDSHIP HAD
LOST ITS SHINE.

WHEN THE FIRST AMERICAN DIPLOMATS TO LIVE IN CHINA FOR OVER
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PAGE 02 STATE 103845

TWO DECADES ARRIVED IN PEKING LAST YEAR, THERE WAS A

NATURAL SENSE OF ELATION THAT THE WORLD'S RICHEST AND THE WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS NATIONS WERE AT LAST ON SPEAKING TERMS.

BURGEONING TRADE FIGURES AND A STRING OF "FIRSTS" IN TERMS OF CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC AND SPORTING EXCHANGES WERE HEADY STUFF AFTER 20 YEARS OF MUTUAL HOSTILITY, AND GAVE THE NEW RELATIONSHIP A GLOSS WHICH AT TIMES TENDED TO OBSCURE THE BASIC PROBLEMS WHICH STILL DIVIDED THE TWO COUNTRIES.

BUT IN RECENT MONTHS, DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS, THE CRITICISM CAMPAIGN IN CHINA AND THE WATERGATE AFFAIR IN THE US HAVE MADE BOTH COUNTRIES TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE UNDERLYING STABILITY OF THEIR TIES, AND AT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ATTITUDES MAY CHANGE IF THE ARCHITECTS OF DETENTE ON EITHER SIDE LEAVE THE POLITICAL STAGE.

MUCH OF THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC LINKS, ALBEIT INFORMAL ONES, BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES WAS DONE BY SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER THROUGH A SERIES OF MEETINGS, OFTEN ARRANGED WITH A CLOAK AND DAGGER AIR OF MYSTERY, WITH THE CHINESE LEADERS MAO TSE-TUNG AND CHOU EN-LAI.

THUS IT WAS ALREADY UNDERSTOOD BEFORE THE LIAISON OFFICES WERE SET UP IN WASHINGTON AND PEKING THAT AMERICA DID NOT REPRESENT A MILITARY THREAT TO CHINA, THAT US FORCES WOULD IN TIME BE WITHDRAWN FROM THEIR EAST ASIAN FOOT-HOLDS, AND THAT THE SOLUTION OF THE TAIWAN PROBLEM WAS ULTIMATELY AN INTERNAL CHINESE AFFAIR.

IT WAS HOPED THAT THESE STEPS TOWARDS RAPPROCHEMENT WOULD PROVIDE THE IMPETUS TO STIMULATE THE RAPID SOLUTION TO OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS SUCH AS AMERICA'S CONTINUED RECOGNITION OF TAIPEI AND THE FROZEN BANK ASSETS HELD IN EACH COUNTRY.

BUT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE IF ANY VISIBLE PROGRESS ON SUCH ISSUES IN THE PAST YEAR, AND THIS TOGETHER WITH A RECENT UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 103845

HARDENING OF CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ACCEPTABILITY IN CHINA OF WESTERN CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY HAS LED TO FEARS THAT RELATIONS WERE STAGNATING OR EVEN DETERIORATING.

SOME DIPLOMATS HERE FEEL CHINA MUST HAVE BEEN PIQUED BY THE RECENT APPOINTMENT OF MR. LEONARD UNGER, A SENIOR CAREER DIPLOMAT, AS THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN

TAIWAN; A MOVE WHICH INDICATED THAT THE US WAS NOT PREPARING TO DOWNGRADE ITS COMMITMENT TO CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S NATIONALIST REGIME.

ON THE OTHER HAND, TAIWAN IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY ISOLATED BY EVENTS SUCH AS THE SEVERANCE OF ITS AIR LINKS WITH JAPAN, AND THE IMPENDING RECOGNITION OF THE PEKING GOVERNMENT BY SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, SUCH AS MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES. THE LOW PROFILE ADOPTED BY THE UNITED STATES ON THESE ISSUES IS SEEN AS FAVORING PEKING'S AIMS.

SIZEABLE AMERICAN FORCES ARE STILL STATIONED IN SOUTH KOREA AND INDOCHINA, WHERE AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE LON NOL REGIME SHOWS NO SIGN OF ENDING, THOUGH SOME OBSERVERS FEEL THE CHINESE ARE LESS KEEN IN PRACTICE THAN IN PRINCIPLE TO PUSH FOR THEIR SPEEDY WITHDRAWAL IN CASE THE RUSSIANS SHOULD TRY TO MOVE IN AND FILL THE RESULTING POWER VACUUM IN A SENSITIVE AREA FOR CHINA.

TRADE IS ANOTHER FIELD IN WHICH EARLY ENTHUSIASM HAS BEEN TEMPERED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. TWO-WAY TRADE SHOT UP FROM ALMOST NOTHING IN 1971 TO 750 MILLION DOLLARS LAST YEAR, OF WHICH NEARLY NINE-TENTHS REPRESENTED US EXPORTS, INCLUDING CONSIDERABLE GRAIN SALES.

CHINA RECENTLY REFUSED TO ACCEPT SEVERAL SHIPMENTS OF AMERICAN GRAIN BECAUSE THEY WERE INFECTED WITH A TYPE OF FUNGUS WHICH AMERICAN EXPERTS REGARD AS HARMLESS AND EASILY ELIMINATED. SOME AMERICAN SOURCES HAVE SEEN POSSIBLE POLITICAL UNDERTONES IN CHINA'S REFUSAL TO TAKE THE GRAIN.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 103845

AMERICAN WHEAT TRADERS AND SCIENTISTS ARE NOW MEETING CHINESE OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM, WHICH COULD JEOPARDIZE CONTRACTS WORTH NEARLY 100 MILLION DOLLARS.

THOSE WHO BELIEVED THAT RELATIONS WERE TAKING A TURN DOWNWARDS ALSO POINTED TO THE FIVE-MONTH ABSENCE FROM HIS POST OF MR. HUANG CHEN, CHINA'S TOP MAN IN WASHINGTON, AND THE SUBSEQUENT RECALL OF HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN PEKING, VETERAN US DIPLOMAT DAVID BRUCE.

BUT WHEN MR. BRUCE RETURNED TO PEKING AFTER AN EIGHT WEEK ABSENCE, HE TOLD JOURNALISTS HE HAD SEEN NO INDICATION OF ANY COOLNESS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND HE HAS SINCE BEEN AT PAINS TO DENY SPECULATION THAT HE WAS TIRED OF HIS PEKING POST, EITHER PERSONALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY.

DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS IN THE CHINESE CAPITAL BELIEVE THAT AFTER THE FIRST EUPHORIA OF THE HONEYMOON PERIOD, US RELATIONS WITH CHINA ARE SETTling INTO THE SAME PATTERN AS THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

"WE ALL HAVE OUR UPS AND DOWNS WITH THE CHINESE" SAID ONE WESTERN DIPLOMAT. "BUT IT WOULD BE MAKING A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL TO SAY THAT SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS ARE TURNING SOUR."

OTHER OBSERVERS SAID THAT AFTER THE MAJOR POINTS OF PRINCIPLE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, THE COMPARATIVELY ROUTINE WORK OF THE LIAISON OFFICE MUST AT TIMES SEEM SOMEWHAT ANTICLIMACTIC, BUT IT DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN CHINA'S ATTITUDE WAS CHANGING FOR THE WORSE.

BECAUSE OF THEIR CONTINUED RECOGNITION OF THE TAIWAN REGIME, THE AMERICANS HERE HAVE NO OFFICIAL STANDING AND DO NOT ATTEND FORMAL DIPLOMATIC FUNCTIONS, WHICH SERVE AS ARTERIES FOR THE FLOW OF FACT AND RUMOR ON WHICH THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY FEEDS IN THE RESTRICTED PEKING ENVIRONMENT.

BUT THE LIAISON OFFICE DOES ALL THE WORK OF AN EMBASSY, AND THE 30 OR SO AMERICANS HAVE MADE A FAVORABLE IMPACT
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 103845

ON THE PEKING SCENE, BOTH SOCIALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY.

MR. BRUCE, WHO HEADS THE OFFICE, HAS SERVED AS AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, PARIS AND BONN. SINCE HIS ARRIVAL HERE HE HAS BECOME AN AVID ENTHUSIAST OF MAO-TAI, THE FIERY COLORLESS SORGHUM-BASED SPIRIT IN WHICH TOASTS ARE DRUNK AT STATE BANQUETS. UNDER HIM IS A STAFF OF EXPERIENCED CHINESE-SPEAKING DIPLOMATS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE SPENT SEVERAL YEARS ANALYZING CHINESE AFFAIRS FROM HONG KONG.

THERE ARE ALSO SIX MARINE GUARDS, WHO HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN A WELCOME ADDITION TO THE HEAVILY OUTNUMBERED BACHELORS IN THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY HERE, BUT ALSO SET UP PEKING'S MOST SWINGING, THOUGH SADLY SHORT-LIVED NIGHTSPOT, THE "RED-ASS SALOON."

THE AMERICANS ARE SUBJECT TO THE SAME TIGHT RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL OUTSIDE PEKING'S CITY LIMITS AS OTHER FOREIGN RESIDENTS, BUT THEY TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PICNIC AND SIGHTSEEING SPOTS AROUND THE CHINESE CAPITAL.

ONE RECENT PICNIC AT THE CRUMBLING TOMB OF ONE OF THE MING DYNASTY (1368-1644) EMPERORS, SITUATED IN A QUIET VALLEY ENCIRCLED BY MOUNTAINS TO THE NORTHEAST OF PEKING, INCLUDED PEOPLE OF A DOZEN NATIONALITIES, AMONG THEM U.S. DIPLOMAT BRUNSON MCKINLEY AND HIS WIFE NANCY.

ROWING, SOFTBALL AND TENNIS ARE OTHER SPORTS IN WHICH AMERICANS HAVE MADE THEIR MARK HERE. THEY ARE ALSO KEEN COLLECTORS OF OLD CHINESE BRIC-A-BRAC AND FURNITURE, WHICH CAN BE PICKED UP FAIRLY CHEAPLY IN THE JUNK SHOPS SCATTERED AROUND PEKING.

THOUGH THEY SHARE THE FRUSTRATIONS AND PROBLEMS OF OTHER FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN THE "GILT GHETTOES" AS THE FOREIGN COMPOUNDS HERE ARE KNOWN, IT IS SOMETIMES HARD TO REALIZE HOW QUICKLY THE AMERICANS HAVE MOVED FROM BEING CHINA'S NUMBER ONE ENEMY TO THE MORE DESIRABLE STATUS OF "FOREIGN GUESTS."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 103845

CHINESE POLICY SHIFTS OF THIS SORT CAN SEEM ABRUPT TO OUTSIDERS, AND SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE PENDULUM COULD SWING THE OTHER WAY AGAIN.

BUT MOST DIPLOMATS HERE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO SEE ANYTHING OTHER THAN A STEADY IF UNSPECTACULAR GROWTH IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA.
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